



## Meeting Minutes

Minutes of  
**George Mason Elementary School**  
General PTA  
October 18, 2021  
7:00 – 8:00 pm

1. Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm.
2. Minutes from the September 27, 2021 meeting approved at 7:05 pm.
3. Recognition of the month of October as Principal's Appreciation Month – special thanks to Dr. Oliver.
4. Update from Dr. Oliver:
  - A. Oct 22nd – picture day.
  - B. Oct 26th – school COVID testing begins (every Tuesday at 1:30pm for GMES) in gymnasium for students who are opted-in via parental permission.
    1. Rapid test administered. Any student who tests positive will remain in place for a follow-on PCR test, and parents will be notified.
  - C. Oct 29th – Dragon Spirit day.
  - D. Nov 2nd – school closed for election day. Bake sale.
  - E. Nov 11th – school closed for parent-teacher conferences.
  - F. Nov 12th – early release for parent-teacher conferences. Last day for TAG referrals for all grades.
5. Talented and Gifted (TAG) program presentation from Alicia Alston-Harrison (power-point presentation):
  - A. Overview of the TAG program.
  - B. Information on the Young Scholars Model.
  - C. Information on General Intellectual Ability services.
  - D. Earlier than normal referral date (submit no later than Nov 12th).
  - E. Screening occurs from November 2021 through January 2022.
  - F. Placement for eligible students occurs in January 2022.
  - G. Demonstration of how to submit a Powerschool TAG referral.
  - H. Explanation of TAG evaluation/placement criteria.
  - I. Appeals process for students not found eligible for TAG.
  - J. Question 1: Can you tell us when the CoGAT testing will be administered in the coming week/s? Dates? Answer: Letter is going home on Thursday with this information. Specific testing dates will come from individual teachers.
  - K. Question 2: If a student is identified as gifted in 4th grade does the student stay in the program through 12th grade? Answer: Students will continue in GIA, but may not continue in SAA, pending follow-on testing/screening.

- L. Question 3: Are unique considerations made for students with disabilities in the TAG identification process? Answer: we do have students who have disabilities but are in TAG. We have more than one evaluation criteria, which should provide a more holistic view of students.
  - M. Question 4: Will NNAT scores be considered for SAA referral or only CogAT? Answer: CogAT only.
  - N. Question 5: Can you differentiate between the CoGAT and NNAT? Answer: NNAT is more of a visual test, and CogAT is more of a reasoning test.
  - O. Question 6: What year does all this start? In other words, as the parent of a kindergartener, do I need to worry about this yet? Answer: We have GIA students in Kindergarten. If you feel that your child could benefit for that, put in the referral and we will evaluate.
6. Update from Ashley Simpson-Baird:
    - A. Ashley Simpson-Baird and Alexia Smokler will host a community building and information sharing coffee at Community Lodgings on Nov 4th at 8:30am.
  7. Programs update from Julie Zahn:
    - A. 16 programs ongoing through December 9th.
    - B. 25 students on full scholarship.
  8. Fundraising update from Liz Bartlett:
    - A. Future restaurant nights on Oct 27th, and Nov 18th. Information will come home in Thursday folders.
    - B. Volunteers needed for Party on the Patio, and for Dragon Donations.
    - C. We need bakers and helpers for the Election Day bake sale on Nov 2nd.
  9. Membership update from Meghan McCarthy:
    - A. We are at two-thirds of last year's membership.
    - B. You can pay your PTA dues here: <https://georgemasonpta.membershiptoolkit.com/membership>
    - C. Website redesign will occur in January.
  10. PTAC update from Tasha Hensley:
    - A. Reflection submission due Oct 25th. Please submit here: [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScVAe1WAmXKuKXE23GjDeFz5jJilXvS5sEo\\_mdIK5taN3T4Q/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScVAe1WAmXKuKXE23GjDeFz5jJilXvS5sEo_mdIK5taN3T4Q/viewform)
    - B. If you would like to attend the PTAC Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) meeting, email Greta at [dei@alexvaptac.org](mailto:dei@alexvaptac.org).
    - C. School Board candidates forum can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/alexandriaptac/>
  11. School building modernization update from Crystall Merlino:
    - A. Reminder that the Alexandria City Council will vote on the GMES swing space in November.
    - B. Once we have the link to the virtual event, we will disseminate widely.
    - C. ACPS representatives will attend the December PTA meeting to provide an update on the GMES modernization project.
  12. Budget and audit update from Lea Poggi:
    - A. Audit is complete, and approved.
    - B. Presentation of Balance Sheet.
  13. School Board update from Cindy Anderson:

- A. We publish board briefs each Friday, including a recent brief on the TAG selection process, and another brief on air quality testing.
- B. Capital Improvement Budget process will begin soon, and voted on by the end of the year.
- C. Question: now that we will have on-site testing, does that change protocols on testing/quarantining? Answer: no change; however, we intend to discuss this at our Thursday meeting.

14. Meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm.